



## GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship December 29, 2024 9:30am  
First Sunday of Christmas

### Gathering

*The prelude, the first act of worship, sets the tone for what is to follow.  
So, we invite you as worshipers to gather, to transition from your busy lives  
into a sacred place of communion with God and with each other. – Dr. Kimo Smith, adapted*

PRELUDE

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”  
Linda Dover, organist

arr. Don Michael Dicie

*In worship following reflective music, we are requesting a response of quiet or a  
contemplative “amen.” Any music that elicits a response of applause is to the glory of God.*

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Karen Wright

LIGHT FOR THE JOURNEY

**O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in thee tonight.**

The journey continues, and the light remains.

**We have been changed on this journey.**

We have journeyed from grand to humble places in search of Good News.

**We are a people who believe that Good News resides in every place.**

The milestones and markers of hope, peace, joy, and love

have guided us along the way.  
**God's light continues to go before us, we are never alone.**

Holy and Living God, we pray for all who seek.  
Too often, we are seeking things that do not satisfy.  
Give us wisdom to pursue what really matters as this new year approaches.  
Call us to a "turning"—following your Star of Wonder.  
Call us to "re-turn" toward your purposes for us.  
Remind us that our longing and our waiting are wrapped in your care.  
Draw us to a more simple and humble existence in which  
our treasures are defined by the hope, peace, joy, and love  
we feel and also give away.  
We pray this in the name of your Son,  
Jesus, the Christ, the Savior of Our Lives. **Amen.**

Let this be a marker of assurance that we are moving in a faithful direction:  
God is with us every step of our way toward your Kin-dom.  
Jesus has been born into our lives.  
The Spirit is transforming us in this place.

As people forgiven and freed,  
I invite you to pass the Peace of Christ among you  
[and those worshiping remotely, we are glad you are on the journey with us!].

**ONE:** May the peace of Christ be with you.

**ALL: And also with you and all others!**

\*HYMN 132

"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"

IN DULCI JUBILO

# 132 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joi - ce with heart and soul and voice;  
 2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joi - ce with heart and soul and voice;  
 3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joi - ce with heart and soul and voice;

give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;  
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!  
 now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!

ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.  
 He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.  
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!  
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!  
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Carols using two languages, like this one dating from at least the 14th century, belong to a special group called "macaronic," the original languages here being German and Latin. Though the present version is only in English, it is sung to the traditional German folk melody.

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

*(Awakening to worship will not meet this morning.)*

ONE: May the peace of Christ be with you.

**ALL: And also with you and all others!**

\*HYMN 119

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

MENDELSSOHN

# 119 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1 Hark! The her - ald an-gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king.  
 2 Christ, by high - est heaven a-dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,  
 3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righ-teous-ness!

Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"  
 late in time be-hold him come, off-spring of the vir-gin's womb.  
 Light and life to all he brings, risen with heal - ing in his wings.

Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise; join the tri-umph of the skies;  
 Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the in-car - nate de - i - ty,  
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

with the an-gel - ic host pro-claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
 pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em-man - u - el.  
 born to raise us from the earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Brought together in the mid-19th century, the text and tune of this familiar carol began in quite different forms. The text had ten stanzas and began, "Hark, how all the welkin rings." The tune was created for a festival celebrating Gutenberg's introduction of moveable type.

JESUS CHRIST: BIRTH



Equipping

SCRIPTURE LESSON Colossians 3:12–17 (NRSVue)

Therefore, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

ANTHEM

“Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”

Music by J. S. Bach

Chancel & Exaltation! Singers

Lyrics by Martin Janus, 1661

Donna Heer, violin

*Jesu, joy of our desiring, holy wisdom, love most bright;  
drawn by thee, our souls aspiring soar to uncreated light.*

*Word of God, our flesh that fashioned, with the fire of life impassioned,  
striving still to truth unknown, soaring, dying round thy throne.*

SCRIPTURE LESSON Luke 2:41–52 (NRSVue)

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents were unaware of this. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day’s journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished, and his mother said to him, “Child, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been

anxiously looking for you.” He said to them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them, and his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years and in divine and human favor.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words  
**Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

“Teenagers”

Rev. Karen Wright

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.  
Amen.**

A CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

OFFERING OF GIFTS AND MUSIC

“Pastorale”  
Linda Dover, organist

by Ignace Leybach


Sending

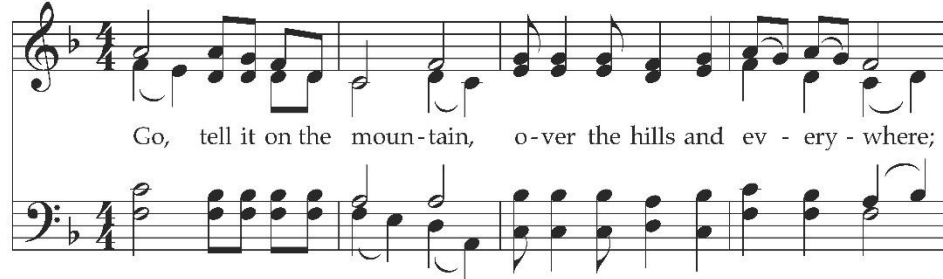
\*HYMN 136

“Go, Tell It on the Mountain”  
*(Refrain and vs.1 & 3)*

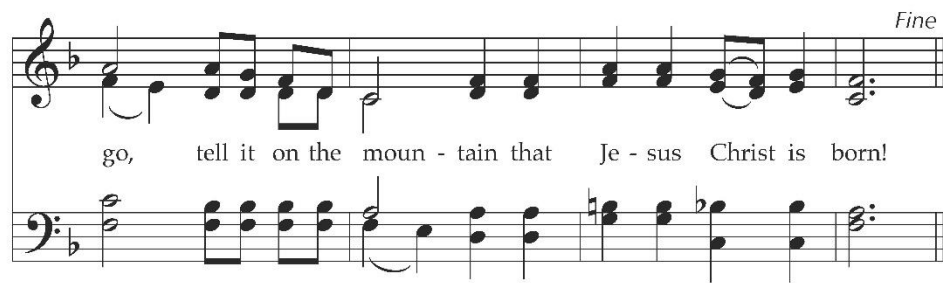
GO TELL IT

# 136 Go, Tell It on the Mountain

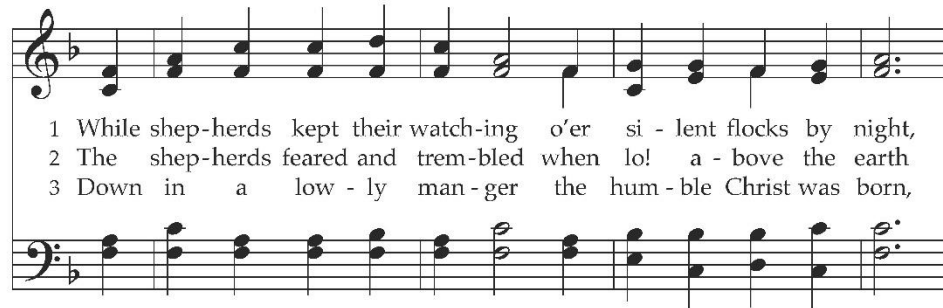
Refrain 



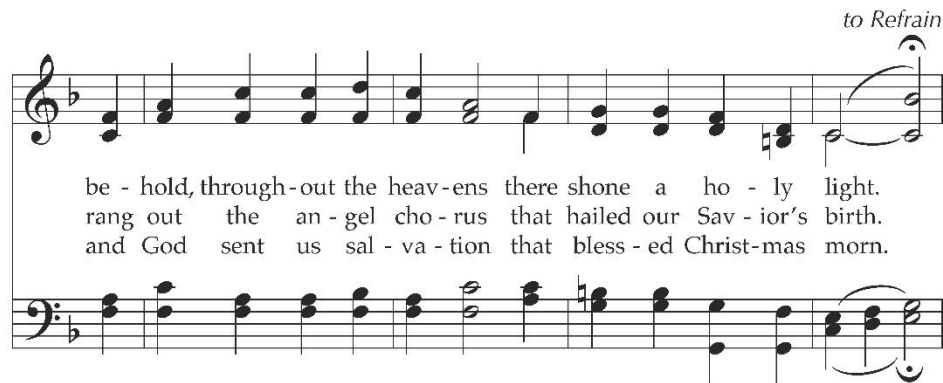
Go, tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills and ev - ery - where;



go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,  
2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth  
3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born,



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.  
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

Like other material from oral traditions, 19th-century African American spirituals flourished without being written down. Their refrains were their most stable parts, and narrative stanzas were often improvised to fit. These Nativity stanzas attempt to recall that tradition.



SONG OF JOY

“Sing We Noel”

by Noël Goemanne

Chancel & Exaltation! Singers

***Sing we noel, noel, noel, noel, noel, sing we noel!***

*Christ was born for us today; love and peace be here to stay.  
Now we raise to heaven our voice, sing we now, rejoice, rejoice.*

***Sing we noel, noel, noel, noel, noel, sing we noel!***

*Mary now filled with heav’nly joy: “Emmanuel” she named her boy.  
Heaven is near, “O do not fear,” the angel said, “The Christ is here!”*

*Heaven came to earth, he saved us by his birth.*

*O mighty child, O King of kings, the universe in praise now sings.*

***Sing we noel, noel, noel, noel, noel, sing we noel!***

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Rev. Karen Wright

POSTLUDE

“Sonata for Bells”

by G.F. Handel

Linda Dover, organist

*\*Stand in body or spirit*

GOD’S PEACE TO YOU

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